

Alzheimer's Association

Carrie Collins – State Director of Public Policy, Michigan Chapters

Jennifer Howard – Executive Director of Michigan Great Lakes Chapter

Gretchen Smith – Impacted by the disease

Thank you so much for allowing us to testify in front of your committee today on behalf of the Alzheimer's Association Charity Tax Check-Off Bills. Our plan today is to keep our testimony to 68 seconds each. If we do that, three Americans will have developed Alzheimer's during the time that we were testifying before you today. As the baby boomers age, those numbers will double and someone will develop Alzheimer's disease, the most common form of dementia, every 34 seconds.

Across the nation and in Michigan, Alzheimer's disease is a serious problem. How we address it as a state will determine whether Michigan can continue to attract and retain people in key age demographics, such as retirees. In Michigan, 273,804 people are living with a diagnosed case of dementia. Many more members of their family are impacted by the diagnosis. In my five years with the Alzheimer's Association I have come to learn that there are two types of families, those that have been touched by Alzheimer's and those that will be. One thing I have consistently been proud of is the services that the Alzheimer's Association offers free of charge to your constituents. Caregivers, those living with a diagnosis and those concerned about the disease can get information, training, referrals and support. Since over 70% of those living with a dementia diagnosis are at home with an unpaid family or friend serving as a caregiver, our services are often a lifeline of education and support.

Until 2009, the State of Michigan recognized the Alzheimer's Association as a partner in diverting those with the disease from costly and expensive long term care. We received \$435,000 in the state budget through the Healthy Michigan Fund to offer our toll-free hotline and many other support services to those in Michigan. When you calculate the cost of long-term care and the fact that we touch thousands of clients around the state, it quickly paid for itself and then some. When that money was cut we had to cut back on our services. In good faith we have struggled to maintain as many of those services as we can through donor support the last 4 years, but we are reaching a critical point. We need funding sources such as the one that the Charity Tax Check-Off will offer to continue to be there for your constituents, the ones that are living with the disease now and the ones that will find out next week, next month, next year that they are living with the disease or they are now a carepartner for someone that they love with the disease.

State Director of Public Policy

Carrie Collins

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**Thank you to the House Taxation Committee for listening to our testimony this morning and thank you for your continued work on our behalf...I'm Jennifer Howard, Executive Director of the Alzheimer's Association, Michigan Great Lakes Chapter and I've worked personally with hundreds of families living with Alzheimer's.**

Alzheimer's Association Introduction to services...

- Support, educate and care for those with Alzheimer's and other dementias and for their care partners
  - 24/7/365 Helpline
    - Care Consultation
    - Information and Referral to other local resources
    - Education about the disease, caregiving techniques including communication
  - Education Services
    - Classes throughout all counties in MI on the disease, caregiving techniques, coping strategies, good self care including...
      - Know the 10 Signs of Alzheimer's
      - Alzheimer's: The Basics-Early, Middle and Late Stage
      - Planning for the future: legal and financial considerations, what to expect with the disease
    - Conference and education series for family and professional caregivers
  - Support Groups
    - Ongoing monthly support groups for those affected, care partners and other specialty groups like male care partner and early stage
  - Early Stage Outreach
    - Linking those with memory loss to others with memory loss and their care partners
  - Physician Outreach
    - Education for physicians on early detection, linking patients to community resources like the Alzheimer's Association
  - Safety Services for those who wander (1 in 7 will wander)
    - Safe Return
    - Comfort Zone-GPS
  - Online
    - Education programs
    - Care consultation
    - Chat forums for support

Jennifer Howard  
Executive Director

### Client Testimony

I am Gretchen Smith and I was diagnosed with early-stage Alzheimer's in 2009. Three rounds of intense testing led to a second diagnosis – Mild Cognitive Impairment. No matter what the diagnosis – Alzheimer's, dementia, Mild Cognitive Impairment, there is an overwhelming need for services provided by the Alzheimer's Assn., Michigan chapter. These include early stage engagement programs, caregiver support groups, working with physicians and other health care professionals to better understand how to diagnose Alzheimer's in its earliest stages. This is a disease that robs the patient of their cognitive abilities and the caregiver of knowing presence of the person that has been their spouse, son, daughter, or parent. The Alzheimer's Association empowers patients and caregivers alike to understand and cope with this progressive disease. There is no other resource providing the quality and caliber of services of the Alzheimer's Association. I urge your support in funding initiatives for the Alzheimer's Association that simply can't be met by donor support alone.

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